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An African Net



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An African Net

A study of the West Africa
Mission of the Presbyterian
Church in the U. S. A., edited
by Helen L. Kittredge. Based
on Articles in THE DRUM
CALL, the Quarterly Magazine
published by the Mission.

*"Who are you that write so superbly
in the backwoods of the forest."*

JEAN K. MACKENZIE
in "African Clearings."



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The Story of the Mission

IN THE FOREST about twenty miles northeast of Efulan, three degrees north of the equator on the West Coast of Africa in the Cameroun, there is an immense bare rock, and down across the face of this rock are the tracks of a huge sheep. Tradition says that in past ages God, leading a mighty sheep, passed that way. And we modify this ancient tradition and say that the Lamb of God has surely passed this way and is still marching on across this dark continent, leaving deeply imbedded upon untold thousands of these child people the foot-prints of his love and devotion.

And the men and women who have gone as missionaries to these primitive people have heard the call of Christ, "Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men." For truly they have gathered in their net thousands of souls that shine through the gloom of the forests, reflecting in their lives the love of the Great Fisher of mankind.

In 1914 Miss Mackenzie in writing of the West Africa Mission said: "Five decades ago the West Africa Mission was housed on Corisco Island and neighbored by the American Mission at Gaboon on the mainland. Not until 1871 were these two amalgamated under the Presbyterian Board. At the time of which we speak, 1864, four missionaries were home on furlough, the remaining five were on the island. They must pass its ring of surf and sail forty miles in an open boat to visit their three out-stations on the coast of the mainland. Corisco is one degree north of the equator. You must think of this little island, set in its silver ring of surf, as very beautiful and very lost from the world and of those five tribal brothers of yours as the center of happenings very dark, very tragic. About one hundred Christians there were in that early church and perhaps one hundred children in the mission school. Fourteen Africans were entrusted with responsibility, one of these was the wonderful Ibia, so long a pastor among the Benga and whose son is now pastor over his father's church."

Another decade and in 1874 the Mission occupies Corisco, Baraka in the Gaboon and Benito on the shore of Spanish Guinea. There are eleven tribal brothers of your own in the heat and burden of that day. There are now one hundred and sixty-seven church

members and nearly two hundred school children. Six missionaries have died in this decade. God has given us better days but there is a trace of tears upon the map.

In 1884 the Mission has sent an arm up the river from Baraka, for Anzom is a station. And there are two stations up the Ogowe River. These were the days of Trader Horn and his travels and his tales of the little missionary. There are seven out-stations. This effort inland is a beginning of new things and there is a new wind in the sail. The Mission reports to the Board of God's servant Benga Ibia in Corisco: "His plans and influence have the great merit of aiming at self-support both in church and in school." This in 1884 and spoken of a black man!

In 1894 the Mission with twenty-two missionaries has left Corisco to the care of the native Christians, has disposed of the bulk of its work in the French Congo to the French Protestant Society at work in that colony, has held the work at Baraka, Anzom and Benito and has opened up two stations in the Cameroun, one of these, Batanga on the coast, one hundred miles north of Benito, the other Efulan, inland from Batanga fifty-seven miles, among the forest people. God's child, the Bulu, begins to move across the page. There are now over twelve hundred communicants in the coast churches, over three hundred children in the schools, over forty native assistants in school and church and that year's report takes account of over a thousand patients treated by Mission doctors. The Board has granted the request that a man be sent out for industrial work and he is on the field.

This brings the history of the Mission up to the latter years of the last century. Writing in 1926, Dr. Melvin Fraser here takes up the story: "There is a note of achievement in the pen picture of contrasts between prevailing conditions in our Africa Mission field thirty years ago and today, and is not only interesting as a bit of modern history of something that again 'turned the world upside down,' but as a kind of dynamic incentive to more of such turning.

"Thirty years ago Efulan station was an infant of less than three years. Today, Baraka and Angom having been transferred to the Paris Evangelical Society, the annual budget is made out for six additional stations, the average of one new station every five years—Elat, MacLean Memorial at Lolodorf, Metet, Foulassi, Sakbayeme and Yaounde, with occupation of Bafia soon to ripen into the status of a station.

“Thirty years ago about a score of missionaries by dint of grit and grace were on the field. Today there are more than four score. But strangely enough, while the number of missionaries has increased fourfold, the work has so expanded that each missionary seems to have about four times as much to do.

“Thirty years ago there were some half-dozen organized churches dotting the coast, only one, Angom, inland. Today there are forty-four churches and nearly nine hundred groups not yet organized into churches reaching more than two hundred miles into the jungle interior and holding a membership of over twenty-eight thousand men and women.

“A score and a half years ago, as many Bible readers as there are fingers on one hand, with little or no special training and operating within the bounds of the organized churches on the coast, constituted the native evangelistic force. But the Spirit of God has been at work and things have been brought to pass. Now some five hundred Bible readers, like the stars on a dark night, twinkling, differing in magnitude and difficult to count, men who start and hold preaching points are distributed far and near, groups of eighty at a time taking their rotary turns at the school of systematic Bible training. This host of men, mostly young, on meager though ‘living’ wage, names unknown in the homeland, are true knights of the cross, mighty and indispensable in soul-winning in our Mission. Thirty years ago the Presbytery of Corisco could report only two or three licentiates; now there are nine ordained men and eighty in theological school.

“In those days, small vernacular schools were running rather spasmodically at one or more stations and village schools were scarce. Now there are in each station two to three hundred vernacular boys and girls studying the five-year course of French, and from a score to several dozen surrounding village schools reporting thousands of pupils busy in their separate localities. Then the girls, as soon as they could walk were given in polygamous marriage and the notion prevailed that they could know nothing but submission and servitude. Now a girls’ school of one hundred at any station is a matter of course and through applied Christianity girlhood is getting her Magna Charta. Then boys had to be coaxed to come to school. Today travel being safe and school appreciated the aspiring boys overflow the dormitories and school rooms and gladly pay the nominal fee for

the privilege. And during these years it has dawned upon thousands of boys and girls that the fear of God is both the beginning and continuation of welfare and wisdom.

"In those pioneer days, medical work was small and doctors scarce. Now it is the policy to have a physician at each station with a well-supplied dispensary and equipment to serve thousands who come walking or are carried from near and far.

"Then the native took his pleasure in fighting, gambling and trading. But the visitor of today is amazed to see the hundreds of apprentices at Elat and other stations being trained in many crafts which teach the dignity of work with the hands and provide a means of living.

"In the pioneering days, the native of the interior was amazed at the idea of putting thought on paper, for this was a people without written language. Now more people can read than the number of stars seen on a clear night and a vernacular literature is abroad."

These are a people who have suffered transition of government and government language for the German colony of Kamerun fell during the World War to the allies and in 1916 became the Cameroun, the mandated territory of the French.

That School Palaver

OUR OBJECT, we claim, is to make Christians of those who are not. This is true. And yet if that be our unqualified objective, how, where and when is that self-propagating, able-to-walk-alone, native church ever to be materialized? To us it appears that a great part of our work is the finding of boys and girls gifted by God for the purpose, and the developing of them into men and women who can and will, in the power of Christ, assume that unselfish leadership which alone is able to reach their people to lift them to higher and better things.

“Less than a generation ago missionaries in the West Africa Mission were paying fathers to allow their boys to come to the Mission to learn to read and write. Today those boys, instead of being the wild, painted brass-ornamented, unlettered people their fathers were, are the clean, quiet, and at least partially-educated teachers in the nearly nine hundred schools of the Mission.

“It is difficult for those missionaries to visualize in these days the crude wooden printing blocks cut out by one of themselves which served as the first school material. Today there are printed charts and books in the native language for the nearly 900 village schools in most of which, along with the twelve station day and boarding schools for boys and girls, there are French grammars and readers also. And in these schools there are now enrolled over 32,000 pupils. Besides there are a score of students in the theological school, more than one hundred apprentices in the industrial and agricultural school and forty teachers-to-be in the normal school.

“All this has come about gradually. In the early days it was the custom for the missionaries, during school vacations, to travel from place to place endeavoring to persuade parents to allow their sons to come to the station schools for at least a few months. In 1904 the Mission voted to demand a nominal tuition instead of paying parents for the privilege of teaching their children. While this caused some opposition at first, the new ruling was soon accepted as ‘reading’ was beginning to be appreciated. By 1907 there were as many pupils in attendance as the schools could accommodate.

“The practice of clean Christian living was stressed equally with Christian service and the home villages of the school boys became

evangelistic centers for whole districts, with the boys telling the good news they had received. Many of them went about two by two during vacations to regions untouched and there, seeking out those religiously inclined, started Christian work. So well did they succeed that for years the missionaries were at their wits' end to supply the consequent demand for teachers in these villages.

"With the retirement of the Germans and the coming in of the French in 1916, the whole school system, based upon the German language, and school laws had to be discarded. The French language and school regulations, foreign to practically every one in the Mission, had to be introduced and white teachers found to replace the German ones. Despite the fact that from that time to the present there have never been more than three white French teachers on the field at one time, an exceptionally high grade of work has been maintained. The Negroes of West Africa were an exceedingly primitive people when the first missionaries came to them, and they need more than one generation to develop into the mental and spiritual knowledge and stature of the new men in Christ Jesus which the times demand. The problem of teachers has been so great that though the Mission felt that more time should be given for their development before attempting it too far, the necessity for French teachers has driven them to establish a normal school. We hope in the course of a few years, if missionary teachers may be secured for this school, to have the educational standards such that the African teachers who come out will be sufficiently trained and qualified to assume the responsibility of supervising station schools. It will not be easy; the task is a huge one before both the instructors and the pupils in the normal school. But we feel sure that the black man will not fail. As we reflect upon what the past thirty years have wrought in this part of the world, we are confident that the next thirty years will see an even greater change. The schools of our Mission *must* continue to guide our youth along the path shown by Christ and they can only do it as they are made adequate to fulfill the ever-growing need."

So says George Schwab, who has spent over twenty years on the field and is superintendent of the schools of the Mission.

People who are long-time lovers of the West Africa Mission will remember Mrs. McCleary who went out with her husband, Charles W. McCleary, in 1902, to the station of Elat, the then pioneer station of the Mission. Four months after their arrival there

Mr. McCleary died. Since that time Mrs. McCleary has hardly been out of the schoolroom. Writing in 1926 of her first impression in visiting the school in Elat she says:

"The school building, a shed with thatch roof and ground floor and inside the split log seats did not suggest comfort or convenience but the spirit of earnest effort was there as well as the spirit of fun and mischief.

"One of the two little girls present was given the pointer and told to teach the chart class. She called up one from the crowd of men who sat there and put him through a course of letters, words and sentences in a manner that would have done justice to a trained teacher. I turned from her to a class in arithmetic and saw a boy solve correctly a difficult problem in long division.

"In the afternoon the boys filed past the house carrying hoes and cutlasses enroute to the garden to earn their daily bread. Since this is the Bulu woman's work it meant much for these boys to submit to it. But their daily rations of food, about three cents worth, were earned this way. I was told there were five thousand pine-apples and eight thousand plantains already ripening for them.

"These little side lights were a minor part of their school life. They crowded into the station twice a year, hundreds of boys, with a determined spirit and they met all obstacles, hardships and defeats in a cheerful spirit.

"At the call from the headman for teachers for their towns the first volunteers went out in some instances taking their lives in their hands. The tribal feeling was very intense and the boys faced real danger. At least one of them found an early grave in his school town. Later another boy went to take his place. Once a call from ninety miles away seemed a Waterloo, but one of them said, 'I do not know the way, nor the people, but it is God's work. I will go.' When he returned he was followed by ninety inquirers of the Way. Later I saw him ordained an elder in the church and he has continued to hold that position. One I know refused his father's offer of wealth to accept the position of assistant to the Mission doctor and came to save many in body as well as to show them the way of life. Many are employed by the Government as teachers, clerks, secretaries and medical assistants. Africa's future is in the hands of these young people of today."

Mrs. P. H. Combs tells us of one of the girls' schools.

"The white teacher stands at her door and watches with loving eyes the little girls who come in answer to the drum summons on the opening day of school. Each girl has her basket supported on her back by a head strap and the basket is full, some choice bits of food her mother cooked for her, perhaps a Bulu gospel, a cloth or two, some trinkets, a stick of sugar cane and her toothbrush. Each girl swings the basket from her back and with downcast eyes, mannerly after the old fashion, comes up to greet the teacher. Then the matron, a motherly soul, conducts each of her charges to the dormitory comforting those who are lonesome and befriending those who are new. When all are gathered into the school-house and have sung, 'Good morning to you,' in their native language, and have repeated a thanksgiving psalm, school is in full swing without further ceremony.

"Let me take you to the beginners' department where twenty little tots sit at a long table, little feet a-dangling, little black bodies a-wiggling, little tongues a-going and little bright eyes alert. It's a long road to knowledge when one is at the far end, but it is lots of fun to start with pegs, cards, blocks and sand.

"Will you step into the manual training room? Such an air of busyness prevails. There is the Matthew class making general utility baskets of reeds. Here is the John class weaving mats for beds. This is the Luke class fashioning hats with pith and raffia. And this interesting group is the graduation class making patch-work head cloths for commencement.

"Now let's go down to the kitchen. If there's a place that reminds one of a sewing-bee in America, it is the place where food is being cooked in Africa. There is a girl sitting on the ground floor with a large, smooth stone between her knees grinding peanuts. Another girl has a lot of seeds that look like pumpkin seeds and a board and stick. She gives the seeds a crack with the stick and removes the kernel in a twinkling. Here is another girl with a long, knife-shaped stick peeling plantains as easily as you at home pare apples. Watch her line the pot with a leaf, stand the peeled plantains on end filling the pot, pour in a little water, cover the pot with a wilted leaf and tie it down with a string from the main vein of the leaf. She shoves the logs together, coaxes and blows the fire, and in a moment the pot is boiling merrily. All the time we stand to watch their tongues are going with remarks about the visitors' hair, dress, shoes, eyes and hands. The menu is varied; today they

are preparing peanut soap, boiled plantains and boiled greens. When the meal is ready each girl has a place at the table, is served her share on a white plate and eats with a wooden spoon.

"School studies make up the morning hours and the afternoons are spent by some in garden work, others have dormitory work, while others prepare the evening meal for the whole group. Those going to the garden are armed with a short-handled, narrow-bladed hoe. Each girl has a chum and they like to work in pairs. They are happy as they work and often burst forth in song, mostly native tunes, in time to their hoeing.

"When it is evening and the tropical moon is in full glory then the school girls find rest in dancing in their school yard. They stand in opposing lines and one is 'it.' All keep time by clapping hands in a swinging motion and one foot tapping on the ground. The center one bows to each and gives a peculiar call which is to be answered by an opposite motion of hands and feet. If she passes the whole line without mistake she has won; but if a mistake is made she returns to her place in disgrace and another 'it' is chosen from the other side. This is but one of the games, many of them nature games, in which African childhood is rich. At last the curfew rings and they gather in the dormitory for prayers. Night closes down, wrapping all in quiet and rest, the girls lie down to sleep, happy in the freedom of school routine.

"Thus pass the days and the last day of school arrives with its scurry and bustle of packing baskets. Goodbyes are said and loving embraces exchanged. Far down the road comes back the wish 'dwell in peace' and we lift our voices to say 'go well.' "

Mrs. Schwab adds: "Before the advent of the Christian missionary the boys only had the privilege of home training. Girls were sent to their marriage often while still mere babies. Fortunate today is the girl who has Christian parents. They send her to school where she is taught hygiene, the care of children, and best of all of that great love that surpasses all. In the sunshine of that wondrous love a few of the countless African children are growing up into manhood and womanhood, bringing joy and more abundant life into their communities."

From the boys and girls who come out of these schools we are to draw not only church leaders and teachers but doctors' helpers, nurses, agriculturists and those who will go back to their own villages teaching hygiene, sanitation and proper living.

What kind of men and women are our schools making? If there were a roll-call of them, how would they answer from the many villages of the Forest? They would be telling you of their many works and many kinds of work. If you want to hear the story of a far-famed teacher and organizer of schools, call on Nkulu Ndibi. Stand for a minute outside of his school house in Yebekolle, and that is far from his home town. Listen to the voice of young Africa from within!

“Comment vous appelez-vous”—in a loud strong voice.

“Comment vous appelez-vous”—repeated in many high shrill voices.

“Comment vous appelez-vous”—in a loud strong voice.

“Comment vous appelez-vous”—repeated in many high shrill voices.

A French song, a prayer in French, and the sound of “Oui, Monsieur” at regular intervals.

By these sounds that float across the twenty-five foot wide street to our little bark hut at Ebole Bengon, we know that Nkulu Ndibi's French school is in session.

Nkulu came to the Mission as a young man. He studied at Efulan in the German schools and became so proficient that he was sent out as a German teacher. Then when Germany started out to change the world map, Cameroun changed the spelling of her name, and her people must needs learn French and become Frenchmen. Nkulu was one of the first to do the chameleon's stunt, and he soon became as proficient in French as he had been in German.

Today he holds a monitor's certificate, the highest honor given to the native educators in the colony and not only is he one of our strongest teachers, but he holds a position as Inspector and Supervisor of the Yebekolle work—a position which might be as ably filled by few white men.

Nkulu and his family, and Nleme Nyem and four children are practically prisoners in this part of the country which they have adopted and which they call home, for they all, with the exception of the oldest daughter, are infected with the trypanosome of sleeping sickness, and must go every week to the Sleeping Sickness Hospital for treatments.

Facing this future and knowing full well the outcome, Nkulu has never lost his interest in the work of education and the advancement of his own race. And today he has a school of which we may be proud, and a dormitory filled with boys from all parts of that section of the field.

He holds the regard and esteem of the Government officials in the subdivision in which he has work, and his native brothers and fellow workers look to him for counsel and advice.

Would that the Mission could boast of one hundred men like Nkulu Ndibi!

Listen to the Rev. C. E. Whittier tell us of his friend Esam: "Kiki, where Esam lives, is about seven miles from Dang in Bafia and has the largest school outside of Dang, about 176 pupils. Esam is the kind of teacher we should like in every school. He first teaches the school. Then he and his wife are father and mother to all the pupils, for about half of them are orphans. He feeds them all, too, in that he superintends their work in the school gardens. Then he has some boys making raffia mats, pillows and covers. These he sells and buys school supplies for the boys. On Sunday and for the morning prayers and midweek service he is a most effectual preacher, and a pastor all of the time."

That Doctor Palaver

MEDICAL work in our West Africa Mission though smaller than in the more populous regions is not less important. It makes the missionary's message tangible and intelligent to his hearers. It helps also to destroy their faith in their old superstitions when they see the white doctor, without any pretense of mystery, accomplish more than their own medicine men with all their secrecy and mystical rites.

The Rev. Joseph McNeill has written recently: "Things which the missionaries are doing are things which cause backward bush dwellers not only to cup their hands over their fallen jaws and ejaculate 'Eke,' but also to question at last the doings of their good old days and the potency of fetish. Think what it means for a bushman having directed his steps toward Elat to see in the concrete the new Central Hospital. Here the old African stands in deepest awe."

The hospital consists of several units of buildings—the Administration building, the native wards, the ward for white patients, on a hillside somewhat away from the confusion and bustle of the main section of the hospital, and the doctor's residence. The white ward is equipped with all the modern appliances which can be put to practical use in Africa. The native wards are supplied with beds of board and grass mats, with pillows of wood. This may not sound comfortable to us, but it is the equipment which the African uses at home and which he much prefers to such hot affairs as mattresses and feather pillows. Long experience with village patients has shown the mission doctors that it is much better to provide them with the type of surroundings to which they are accustomed than to offer them, when they are frightened and perhaps homesick, accommodations which will only make them feel more strange and uncomfortable. Besides this, the patient usually brings along with him anywhere from one to a dozen members of his family, so that it is absolutely necessary for the wards to be equipped with furnishings which require the least possible amount of cleaning.

Here there are sterilizers, hot and cold water tanks, an ice machine, and the surgical and dental operating rooms with their equipment are not to be surpassed on the whole West Coast. The

X-ray machine is the only one in this colony. From the stock of medicine stored upon the shelves are supplied the sick folk of Bafia, 250 miles away by motor road; of Yaounde, 150 miles away; and Olama, 100 miles away; of Njazenze away down in Ntumu field, out-post medical stations to which people in distress come miles. Two doctors have been in charge, visiting Efulan, Batanga, McLean and Foulassi, performing operations at three of these stations and carrying on the work of the Central Hospital itself. More than 260,000 treatments have been given at the dispensary alone, more than 22,000 on itinerating trips, over 1,000 operations have been performed at the Central Hospital, and here 611 patients have been brought to Christ in the last year. At the two Leper Colonies nearby there are 444 lepers under treatment.

Let us now hear from Mrs. P. J. May, who, as a nurse, sees the great good that medical work can do.

"The African is sick, physically sick. His body is the center around which the most loathsome diseases rage, leprosy, sleeping sickness and a host of others. Our medical personnel is dealing in a very effective way with these scourges of the body, and is teaching the native to care for himself in many ways. Medicine is always on hand. Assistants are being trained in our hospitals and dispensaries and some of them show great promise. The black man has the unfortunate inclination to allow disease to reach hopeless proportions before consulting us. Some who have not been Christianized or adequately so, fall back on heathen practices in times of sickness and make use of their native medicines. The heathen attitude toward disease is that an evil spirit or demon possesses one, resulting in pain where this spirit locates himself.

"Child mortality is great. My abiding joy is found in doing what I can to aid mothers in saving their babies and those of others (for orphans are numerous) from their enemy, malnutrition. It seems that most of these people are suffering from this malady, for their diet is peanuts and a small, tasteless millet seed which they grow in their gardens and dry, crush in a mortar of stone and stir with a little water; and the cooked green plantain.

"These people are docile, teachable, receptive. They want Christianity, they want our medicine and surgery and food. We have a tremendous responsibility in this ever-changing Africa, and the churches at home must be our source of supply."

Dr. Wilmer S. Lehman, for thirty years physician to the tribes of southern Cameroun and more than any man of our Mission, perhaps, friend and physician to the pygmy tribes of these forests, has his word to say about his day's work:

"The days in the dispensary and hospitals may seem much alike to outsiders, but to the doctor they are all very different. Always some new faces, some new development, some new problem to be met, all fraught with opportunities if we are on the alert to improve them.

"The day begins with morning prayers at about 5:40 a. m. in the little chapel. The patients and their friends come. We always have several tribes represented and there are some of these who cannot understand the Bulu in which the service is conducted. The songs, prayer, the Bible portion, an explanation and a memory verse are included in the fifteen or twenty minutes. The medical assistants lead these morning devotions, taking a week each in turn. It is a good way to start the day. The verses of Scripture are repeated—who can tell the good they may do when used by the Holy Spirit! Our desire is that all shall attend these services, and after the bell rings one of the men goes to the different wards calling the people to get up.

"There are always patients to be seen right after breakfast, before we begin the operations. Africa seems to be full of sickness. Some come on very suddenly and are very serious, but for the most part we have to do with the old chronic diseases that make life miserable. Usually the patients have tried many native doctors before we see them. They themselves also usually know the name of their illness and then a few questions from the doctor will help him decide whether there is another disease to be considered. As one looks over the patients in the waiting room one is always sure to see little children. Some are very much frightened at the doctor, as many parents make the white man the terror of their little ones. At times we have difficulty in winning their confidence. Mothers who are sick bring their children, especially if they come from a distance, so there are always many children in the hospital street. The very little ones are carried on their mother's hip, for there are no baby carriages; but who has ever heard a mother complain of carrying her child? Certainly no one here in Africa.

"Then there are men and women from various tribes, among them one will occasionally find a man with the flowing garments of

the Mohammedans. There are traders who have come down from the north, who live in colonies throughout the country. One sees also the well-dressed trader from up the coast, Lagos, Togo and the Gold Coast. But most of those who come to us are people who are poor, with very little clothing and who are much in need of our assistance.

"Most of the patients have come for some definite thing. Many come for the 'needle,' as they call the injection of neosalvarsan. The fame of this treatment has gone far and wide and many come or are carried to have this 'needle' treatment. Neosalvarsan has been a great blessing in this land of dreadful ulcers and unsightly skin lesions. And the way it so quickly heals not only ulcers but long continued headaches, aching joints and bones, and many other disorders, is wonderful indeed.

"The doctor does not have time to see all his patients before operating, but the assistant in the drug room will give them record cards, and supply many with the needed medicine during the morning. The doctor does see, however, the more urgent cases, and in the meantime the patients to be operated upon are being prepared. The writer well remembers one of the first operations, some years ago, when everything had to be done by the doctor, dressings, instruments and patient made in readiness, and when the time came to operate, he was tired out. What a relief it is now to have willing, capable assistants who can attend to all these preliminaries!

"There are some who give the anesthetic very carefully. Dressings are prepared and sterilized beforehand by black women who assist in the dispensary. Instruments are selected, sterilized and laid out in the proper way by one assistant, while another prepares the patient. These helpers have the aseptic or antiseptic sense, and the results show it. What a saving of time and strength to have so many earnest and efficient hands to help! The assistants seem to enjoy operations and all would come to see them if it were possible to spare them from their other work. The operating is done in the morning when it is cooler, and we are usually through at noon. Patients often have to wait their turn for operations so they are always glad when their turn comes. Usually they show no fright or but little anxiety. One little woman told us the day after she was operated that she had spent the night before the operation in prayer. Most of them bear the operations well and suffer little shock.

"At two o'clock the afternoon work begins. There are more patients at the dispensary window where an assistant holds forth.

He is a man of even temper, and is, oh, so patient! Questions have to be asked of the patients over and over, and instructions 'about taking medicine must be repeated carefully. He has a knowledge of several languages, a keen knowledge of human nature, a kind heart and pleasant words. He stands at the window dispensing medicine, and keeping a record of the patients.

"The treatment of ulcers is done in the afternoon also. There is a perennial supply of these, some of which heal easily, but others are slow and difficult to cure.

"This may be one of the days for the 'needle.' Sometimes there are over 300 injections given in a month. Some days it is not possible to give to all who come, and there is some hard feeling, so keen are they for this treatment. It takes a steady hand to give these injections, especially up to thirty and forty in a day, yet we have an assistant who does this well and has given as many as ninety-one in a single day.

"There are little children and adults, too, with the dreadful disease of yaws, which often, if let alone, takes a year to pass. If left to itself in its second stage, it will most certainly be followed in later years by one of a large variety of disorders which may cripple, disfigure or deform, and cause untold suffering. How satisfying it is to be able to check this dreadful disease early. It is easy to understand why the people are so eager to receive the injections. Medicines are dispensed at or under cost. It is the policy of the Mission to have all who are able, pay for medicine and treatment. The medical and surgical work has been self-supporting for the most part, without counting the doctor's salary.

"At the close of the day it is the custom to inspect the wards and see that all is well for the night. The people respond very quickly to a word or joke, and this often helps the weary doctor as much 'as the patient. It is too bad we do not have time to enter more fully into the lives of our patients and know them better. But this seems quite impossible, as every doctor has other duties about the station which draw heavily upon his time and strength. There are all kinds of people under our care, those who pester the life out of us, and those we are always glad to meet; the real heathen and the fine, earnest Christian. It is our duty and privilege to minister to them all. The Lord grant grace to do it cheerfully, tactfully, and lovingly."

That Work Palaver

MORE SWIFTLY than may be conveyed in this brief study, times change in primitive Africa. The African faces a new economic situation at his door which has not been created by the coming of the missionary. However, the missionary as his friend is bound to equip him to meet these new conditions in which he finds himself today. Our Mission early realized the necessity of this practical service and we have today one of the best industrial schools maintained by a mission in Africa.

From its inception Mr. Fred Hope has been the one to guide in the administration of this splendid work called the Frank James Industrial School. Speaking of its growth, he says:

"In 1907 the school was scarcely more than a name. In 1908 the carpenter class consisted of two Bulu boys who were employed in doing the repair work of the station. Their equipment was a palm leaf shed and twenty-five or thirty dollars worth of tools. The tailor class had a few yards of cheap cloth and a second-hand sewing machine whose imperfections in work were even more than the Africans.

"But soon a graduate tailor was brought from the Hope Waddell Institute at Old Calabar, and church women from home sent us a new sewing machine and a supply of cloth. Before we were really ready for business two carriers arrived who, having earned a dollar and a half for transporting loads from the beach, and having seen the sophisticated black man on the coast, were fired with the familiar and inevitable ambition to resemble him. When they found that they could buy a khaki coat for the money they had just received, each of them was measured by the tailor—a new experience. Before those two coats were finished other orders came pouring in, and the class has been these fifteen years trying to catch up with a tribe that has set its heart on a modern aspect. So the tailor class has grown until its gross receipts have been as high as \$9,000 in a single year.

"The growth of the carpenter class was even more rapid than that of the tailor class. The big profits that could be made on rubber and in trade brought many Europeans into the jungle. They came into the 'bush' with nothing in the way of houses and furniture, and their need was our opportunity. They ordered furniture of all kinds, doors, windows and even houses.

"With every order filled many more were received. Men were trained and more trained men were found from the older Missions up the coast, and more Bulu boys were taken in as apprentices under a three-year contract.

"In the beginning of the second year a fire wiped out everything, except a few tools. In spite of these losses we closed the year in good shape financially. As there was no appropriation for the school from the Board, we had to run a store and sell goods to secure money to buy tools and build new shops.

"One of the products that has done a great deal to spread the reputation of the Frank James Industrial School in the Cameroun and neighboring colonies is the rattan furniture. Home-going government officials and business men have carried this rattan furniture into all the colonies up coast and into many European countries.

"Another industry that has attracted wide attention is the ivory department. This class has converted thousands of pounds of elephant tusks into many articles, ivory beads proving the most popular; their sale amounted to about \$6,000 in three years.

"In 1910 a saw mill outfit was purchased. To establish it with all the machinery connected with it has been a tremendous job, done by laymen. Teaching the natives to cut trees, bring in logs, saw them up, plane them and construct houses and all the furniture that goes into them has been a large undertaking. These processes were highly educative to the native, who, in his primitive state, lives in this great forest with all its mahogany and wonderful and beautiful many-colored woods, yet has utilized only a few trees from which he could take the bark. With this bark and a few sticks for posts, he made the walls of his home. With the stalks of the giant palm he fastened on the bark and made the rafters, using the leaves of the same palm for a roof. A few pieces of the bamboo made his bed and no other furniture graced his hut.

"It has been our work to teach these native boys who knew nothing of real work to run and operate this machinery. Missionary teachers with these same natives of the industrial school as helpers, planned and constructed the Central Hospital with all its dwellings, native and European wards, installed pumps, built reservoirs, installed plumbing for hot and cold water, set up the ice machine, the electric light plant and the X-ray. All this has impressed the native with respect, almost awe, for these same missionaries who were able to do such wonderful, such unheard of things.

"In comparing 1908 with the present we realize the growth of this institution. That year the gross output of the school was about \$300, while now it is more than \$35,000. Then less than forty men were in the employ of the school, counting apprentices, teachers and workmen. Now the pay-roll aggregates over 1,000 men. To the tailor and carpenter classes of 1908 have been added shoe-making, tanning, general machine, garage and blacksmithing shop; manufacture of rattan furniture, ivory novelties, pith helmets, hats and caps; when time permits, instruction in mechanical drawing; and the men have also been trained in the making and laying of bricks.

"Our equipment too has grown, and we have the machinery needed in the above-named classes, also two hydraulic oil presses for the manufacture of peanut and palm oils.

"The school has been commended by both the German and French governments. Ex-Governor Garde, governor of the Cameroun until 1923, said in an official letter, 'I cannot pass over in silence the brilliant results of the Industrial School at Elat. It is a model of its kind which our official schools may try to equal, but will surely not surpass.'"

Yet the school is not primarily an employer or even an instructor of labor. It exists to build men. Thorough, self-respecting labor, duly paid for at proper wages, is a long step forward in the African's social progress, and the increasing numbers in the school show that he appreciates this fact. But the deeper importance of the school makes its appeal as well, and both apprentices and workmen are willing, even eager, to give toward the support of the evangelists who go back to their villages and tell "the things of God" which they have learned at Elat, or in their own vacations to go and tell these things to the neighbors at home. While the men are at work in the shop, their wives and families are taught simple hygiene, care of children, and have Bible lessons as well, so that they are not left behind as their husbands progress. The younger Christian women are willing to learn child-care from the missionaries; but almost always there is the old grandmother who insists upon the ancient customs and often has her way in spite of more modern theories. Sometimes the younger generation wins out.

The tribes of the Cameroun are agricultural people; along with other primitive Africans they begin to extend their agricultural ambitions and to produce crops for export. Cocoa has built many a

fine house for energetic farmers and bought many a motor truck to be driven by prosperous chiefs upon the highways that now penetrate the Cameroun.

Fred Hope again says, "The agriculturist has a wonderful opportunity. The native in general is most primitive in his ideas of agriculture. A club with a small iron wedge driven into it is his implement for felling the forest. With this he fells the trees every which way and later this tangle is burned over, leaving all the trees and most of the brush. Here, without stirring or breaking up the soil, the seeds are planted by the women, who are the farmers. The men do not do such lowly work. Farming is the work of slaves and women. The only farming implement is a short, forked stick with one prong, pointed with a piece of iron. Yet the crops this great, fertile, tropical country will produce are almost unlimited. The oil palms can be made a wonderfully paying crop. This country will produce unlimited varieties of fruits, vegetables and other foods. I have just made a list of different articles of food that have come to our table from our own garden and the list numbers sixty. Besides these from our own garden we get others from natives. That is enough to show the great variety of foods this country can produce.

"There is no limit and yet the native knows so little. The opportunity of the agriculturist is almost beyond the power of the imagination.

"Then, too, the native knows so little about preparing the foods he does have. Poorly prepared and half-cooked foods and unsanitary methods of preparation are accountable for many of the complaints and diseases peculiar to these people. It is pitiable to see the meager allowance of illy prepared foods that is the lot of the natives, when there is such an opportunity for good foods. Just as the native lives in his little smoked, dirty, ill-kept hut of bark and leaves and sticks amid the great mahogany forests and unlimited supply of granite, iron and other building material, even so he eats his meager, poorly prepared foods in this fertile, tropical country where the greatest variety of the most wholesome food in all the earth could be had. The Bulu's garden is his granary. He does not have to store food at all. With two rainy seasons a year, a garden is a perpetual thing. His needs are always supplied, after a fashion, from that garden, yet how pitifully small that is compared with what could be produced. And here lies one of the greatest opportunities for a layman.

"There is no station school of our Mission but is dependent on its agricultural department; the boys and girls work in the field and are

fed by the field. There is in all these local efforts the dual effort to maintain old tribal standards and to face modern methods and opportunities; but it is at Elat Station that the major agricultural work of the Mission is conducted. Here it began under the direction of Mr. Victor M. Buck in 1907.

"The first work has been principally experimental to ascertain the best producers from among the great variety of native foods. The outstanding result of these experiments and study is a hardy disease-resisting cassava plant. Within the past fifteen years a peculiar disease has attacked the cassava which lessened its production 80 per cent. Since it is the staple food of these people it meant increased labor and larger gardens to produce what was needed. Acres of this disease-resisting cassava have been planted on mission grounds and cuttings have been sent to other stations and the result is a remarkable success. Soon it will be in the hands of the native generally. Five hundred acres of the seven hundred and fifty belonging to the Central Hospital plant have been turned over for this work."

There are seven young men under instruction in this department and we look forward to a large future.

No one thing has been of greater benefit to the Mission than the Halsey Memorial Press, for the most part the work of the late John H. Bradford. In speaking of this part of the work at Elat in 1923 Mr. Bradford said: "From an industrial viewpoint, the Halsey Memorial Press employs a negligible number, but from an efficient viewpoint, considering heredity, environment, and adaptability, the African leads his American brother artist by a wide margin. The fathers of these typographers were savages without a written language. But these workmen, the first of a new generation, learned their letters in the Mission Schools, learned obedience from school discipline and morals from the teachings of Jesus Christ as interpreted to them by their friends, the missionaries.

"The printing office is continually visited by curious natives to see the marvels of this strange workshop. The press-feeder is an amazement, but the monotype is a still greater wonder. The conversation of a group which one day stood gazing at type-setting was overheard by a missionary. One of them remarked he would like to see the inside of the head of a man that invented such a thing. His neighbor maintained that it could not have been a man but a spirit which could do such wonders. But a third said, 'When people know God for years He gives them wisdom passing understanding.'

“From an evangelistic viewpoint the Press looms large. Without the publication produced by it, the native would be dependent for all his literature upon lands across the sea, the evangelistic message would be limited by the range of the human voice, and the education of these people would be as narrow as the confines of the school room. Instead there have been published here several million pages in the native languages of the African and that with the sole purpose of evangelizing the race. Thus this Press is the one evangelist that knows no bounds, is limited by no physical weakness or tropical climate in carrying the Gospel message far and near.”

That Church Palaver

WE HAVE tried in the foregoing to show what the West Africa Mission has in the way of equipment to bring to these people that very abundant life which is found only in Christ. That life is manifested in the growth of the church which the Rev. Joseph McNeill tells us has never grown more geographically than in the last fifteen years. He continues:

"In 1920 we took over the work which the German missionaries were compelled to drop at Sakbayeme. In 1922 Yaounde, the colonial capital in the heart of the Cameroun, was occupied. In 1924 a minister and his wife were assigned to direct the work in Bafia along the Mohammedan frontier line of advance. In 1925 it was decided to man Djaposten that the Mekae and Lomie fields might be adequately cared for. The difficulty of superintending the widely scattered evangelistic centers from that point, and the need in the field beyond at Molondo presented an immediate and imperative need for a second outpost at Abong Mbang. From all our new frontiers we look out to distant horizons where the smoke of a thousand villages lie, where the call-drums keep sounding, calling us to come. From Efulan comes the word of a mighty work down on the southern border where there are at present several young men acting as evangelists among their own people without any monetary support from the church whatsoever. But not in the south only; in the north, northeast and east as well are the opening doors of opportunity. It can be seen then, that everywhere pastors, more than busy with the established work of their own fields, find their eyes lifted to the forest and grass hills immediately beyond and their hearts filled with a desire to respond to the multitude calling for light."

When Mr. McNeill, writing in 1927, thus speaks he feels behind him the pressure of the church membership of 27,085, a gain of 1,234 over the preceding year. The catechumen classes of over 44,000 show therefore on the rolls of the West Africa Mission as born again almost 72,000 souls, the Sunday school enrollment being about 92,000.

Let us take a look into one of the churches with the Rev. Philip J. May as he first enters upon his work.

"We enter the church and scan the great auditorium. Huge poles support the massive slant roof made of palm branch mats laid over a frame work of bamboo poles. The floor of the church is the bare ground which is covered with crude pews. This building seats about two thousand. Our church buildings are spacious; our largest edifice, the one at Elat, will seat some four thousand people.

"As one enters the church a single black mass greets the eye. Such an audience! I am attracted to several women with huge brass collars about their necks, and a variety of bands on their legs and ankles. Most of the women carry infants in their arms or in the goat strap carriers which are slung over the shoulder. Little boys are seated at the sides of the church where they regard the rest of us with their wondering black eyes. Here and there are women, some of them only girls, with shaven heads which is the Bulu mark of widowhood. Here little girls sit together. There seems a tendency for the people to group together according to age and sex. The men are here in goodly numbers and there is a group of them at the side of the pulpit, the elders of the church, who are as a rule the outstanding men of the community. One of these, the headman of his town, came to visit me today and told me that he thanked God for sending them another white man who will tell them the words of God. Some of the good old hymns were sung. How at home I feel! These Buluized hymns thrill me! And how those boys do sing! The missionary reads the Scripture and tells them the Words of God. 'And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.' The rapt attention of the audience is disturbed only by the occasional cry of one of the many babies. The boys look up at the missionary with intense interest. Like all boys, they are the men of tomorrow and I have great hope for the Bulu as I watch them. Prayer is offered amid a sea of bowed heads. The meeting is over and the people stream forward to grasp us by the hand. They are reluctant to leave and stand around for an hour chatting, which brings to my mind those periods of fellowship after the services in the old church back home.

"Another Sunday is the Communion Sunday. Sabbath school and the morning service were most inspiring. The huge auditorium was crowded to capacity. The observance of the Lord's Supper is always reserved for the afternoon because the reception of new members and baptisms take the major portion of the time of the morning service. At one o'clock in the afternoon the people gather for 'the great honoring,' as it is called in Bulu. The table is a very

plain one and has that worn appearance of African things. The missionary is seated behind the table while on either side are the elders who will aid in this sacrament. A verse of 'Break Thou the Bread of Life' is sung very softly, then prayer and Scripture reading follow. The sermon is a picture of Jesus taking leave of his disciples at the Farewell Supper. The faithful are here. In their hands one may notice the crude ebony or shell spoon with which they will receive the wine, which is the juice of a native fruit. The linen cloth is lifted revealing two bowls and two glasses; the former containing the bread and the latter the wine. At the side of the glasses there lie two spoons with which the elders will serve the wine into those held out by the communicants. All is clothed in silence, with the exception of a noise here and there made by some of the multitude of babies present. The atmosphere is gripping! The elements are served amid the mass of bowed heads while more verses of 'Break Thou the Bread of Life' are sung. Prayer follows, the Apostles Creed is recited, another hymn is sung, the benediction is pronounced and all file silently out.

"Evangelists, elders and people will take to the road on the morrow back to their native villages where they will endeavor to live the Christ-like life in the midst of an environment which is negative, an environment whose pull is ever downward. The tremendous need of Africa is impressed with great force upon my mind. There is a continuous Macedonian call, 'Come over and help us.'"

THE MAN AND WOMAN OF GOD

Yes, it is a Macedonian cry and it is specific. It is for a teacher and a doctor and a preacher. A white man and a white woman to come over and help. But it is more than this; it is a cry to the leadership that is latent in the African people. The most vital interest to the Mission is the degree and the quality of the African response to that cry. To what degree have the tribes of the Cameroun responded to the call to Christian leadership?

Surely it is something to be able to answer that our mission in the Cameroun is served by 743 African school teachers and 612 ordained African evangelists, and there are 49 native assistants in our hospitals and dispensaries. These are all supported by the field, and in speaking of them we are taking no account of the thousands of people who serve without remuneration. And what has been the quality of the response? The teacher has already been spoken of

and we have thrilled to the work that Nkulu Ndibi and Esam are doing and the lives that are being changed under their influence.

Now hear the story of John Bulla Mfum, a Christian workman, ambitious, persistent, efficient and earnest. He ever holds aloft the torch of his Master. He mounts all obstacles and through his medical work is constantly helping his brother in distress.

While quite a small school lad he began his career by catching beetles and butterflies for the white man during his spare time. His efficiency as such a collector gained for him a position in the medical work where he found an outlet for his splendid ambition to learn and his desire to serve.

It matters little what the object or subject may be, or how repulsive externally it may appear, his interest and thought penetrate beyond the outer layer and go after the heart, and he is not satisfied until that heart is put back into the hands of its rightful Owner for service. Thus scores have found life and peace with their Lord through the ministry of this man of God and have become pioneer soldiers of the Cross in far distant villages where the name of Christ had never before been heard.

Patients press constantly their troubles and wants upon him and all receive the same courteous and kindly treatment; always he has a definite purpose in view, that they may better know their Maker. No one goes away from him empty.

He constantly spends and is spent in helping the white doctors that they may be relieved from taxing night calls and that their rest may be undisturbed. He knows in part at least some of the deep meaning of the Cross, for he lives in its shadow constantly and wins through its power.

There are many women too who have responded to this call and are giving their lives in service for others. Among them is Mejo me Kome. When but a little girl she was married to a man with two other wives. Later she was married to a man who had many, many wives. One day some people passing from the next village told a wonderful tale. "The strangest thing is in our town," they said, "it eats, it speaks, it covers its body with cloth, it is a person, but white." Mejo with others hurried to see the strange person. They found Dr. A. C. Good, who told them in a very simple way about God. They went home afterward saying, "Zambe a jo na" (God says thus), as they had heard him say it, but that phrase was all they had been able to grasp.

Months later Mejo was sent to a village near Elat, and while there heard Bekale Mendom,* that wonderful winner of souls, tell the Gospel story. The desire came to her to walk in the new way, and after she was redeemed and sent back to her husband, she and another wife stole away and went back to Elat. They sought Mr. Dager, 'to whom they made known their desire, and he advised and helped them through many perplexities and trials, for their husband was indeed angry when he learned that two of his women dared to bring to his town another 'God than himself. His death finally released them. Mejo then went to school at Elat. Although a grown woman she learned to read the Gospels. Eighteen years ago she married Meva'a, an evangelist, with whom she has lived and worked happily ever since.

Recently when Mejo returned from the hospital where she had gone to have an operation, she said, "As I lay on 'my bed the day before the operation, reading, I was frightened to think of having a knife put into me, but I came to the verse, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' and it gave me a new heart. Jesus said it to me over and over again and I had no 'more fear."

Pleasant and helpful is Mejo always; willing to do anything for any one of any tribe. Her faith is a constant inspiration to all who know her.

When it comes to giving, the African Christian puts the American Christian to shame. When the price of cloth with which to make their clothes went up to five times what it was before the war, and when money became scarcer and scarcer, did the African reduce his gifts to the church so as to pay the increased price for the clothing? No, he went back to his loin cloth, and the women went back to their grass skirts and they attended service as before, although before these hard days came no Christian would be seen in the house of God in such attire, or lack of attire.

And when the offering at one of the stations went down to 700 marks, and the missionary preached a 'missionary sermon, out of their poverty they managed to give 1,500 marks, over *one hundred per cent* increase.

* Note—It is suggested to readers that they learn more of Bekale Mendom in the "Black Pioneer," an appreciation of this man, published by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Price, ten cents.

The African Christian also gives of his time for the Lord. The Christians of Efulan and Alum gave in one year 9,460 days of service—nearly 'twenty-six years of effort to evangelize their fellow countrymen.

He also gives for those who have gone on before. A Christian man and wife give regularly in the church envelopes, they give for each of their living children, and then in addition, in a separate envelope, give for the children who have passed on.

When the new church at Elat was organized in 1903, and six persons were received into membership, the offering of the day consisted of 6 bunches of beads, one tennis belt, 43 agate buttons, one ebony hairpin, 2 felt hats, one small tin basin, one package of native food, 40 chickens, 4 eggs and many other things, in money value about \$35, but in purchasing power \$350.

Mrs. Cozzens tells us of the splendid effort of Mvondo, a native minister, who was greatly distressed because of the failure of his church to meet its obligations, for the report of Presbytery had revealed that his church had the poorest financial record of all.

After giving the matter a great deal of prayerful thought Mvondo came to the white minister and asked if they might not have an all-afternoon meeting to consider the money question. His plan was to have several of the missionaries give twenty minute talks on the subject of giving, after which he would make an appeal for marked increases in the gifts of the people.

The plan carried and the meeting was well attended. The white people spoke well, but Mvondo's address was powerful and effective. This was his closing illustration. "We Bulu, when we cook a chicken, how do we divide it? The 'father, what part is he given?"

"The big piece of breast, of course."

"And the oldest son, what part is he given?"

"The leg and thigh."

"And the younger sons?"

"The wings and back."

"And the 'moneka' (sister's son), what piece is he given?" A titter of amusement ran through the audience as they giggled the answer, "O, he gets the neck."

“O, my friends,” said Mvondo, “I say to you that most of you are giving to your Heavenly Father and his ‘work only the little piece you would throw to the ‘moneka!’”

The pledges were increased that day beyond what any except Mvondo had had the faith even to ask.

With such a splendid field and with so responsive a people to touch with the love of Christ it is no wonder that Mrs. Philip J. May sees in fancy the Africa of the future. Let us go with her in spirit to this land as she describes it to us.

“And now as I sit in my rooms in Africa the real, and look out upon banana and palm trees and the white man’s roses and the forests on the horizon, and I hear the singing of tropical birds, and see a passing woman carrying on her back the burden of food, and hear the lusty voices of boys singing in yonder school-house, I picture in my mind’s eye another Africa, an Africa redeemed by Christ, an Africa of healthy women and free, an Africa of girls and boys equipped to take their places in the world beside the youth of other nations, an Africa of stalwart Christian men, an ‘Africa that knows not the darkness of sin, superstition and ignorance, but one that is delivered from these yokes of bondage and whose lives are cast in the pleasant lighted places of this God-created world.”

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